

# Notes From The Field *SE*

## Pre-Season Report 8/29/18

**UPDATE:** Since biologist have turned in some information we have received significant rain across the state between 8/27/18 - 8/29/18. Please be sure to check your areas out before hunting them in the early season as some places may no longer be accessible anymore.

*Was this helpful? Let us know by taking this [3 question survey](#).*

### **Green Lake/Marquette**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers in previous years for mallards and wood ducks in our area. Blue-winged teal seemed to have had lower production this year as we observed fewer broods this year compared to prior years. Canada goose broods also seemed lower than in previous years in our area, likely do to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers to previous years in Green Lake and Marquette counties. Our area had been drier most of the summer but as of 8/28/18 we received a substantial amount of rain, so water levels are currently returning to normal and in some cases becoming higher than normal. Aquatic food availability is normal with wild rice being our top wetland foods on the landscape. The amount of rice that matures may be affect by the amount of rain we have received recently. Crop harvest in the area seems similar to previous years in corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay.

***Current summer big projects:***

- 1) None

***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

None

### **Sheboygan/Eastern Fond du Lac**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed fewer broods for mallards, blue-winged teal, wood ducks and Canada geese likely do to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect lower numbers compared to previous years in our area. With average rainfall this year in our area our water levels currently are normal. Aquatic food availability is normal with Duckweed, smartweeds, and Macro-invertebrates (snails, mussels, etc.) being our top wetland foods on the land scape. Crop harvest in the area seems on track with a normal year in corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay.

***Current summer big projects:***

- 1) Breached dike on Mullet Creek WA,
  - a. Water control structure to be replaced 2019 (west of CTH G)

***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

Sheboygan county Marsh drawdown. Likely to be drawn down over winter.

Note: Due to a rather flashy system and limited ability to pass water quickly, the Sheboygan Marsh might hold water temporarily and could be excellent waterfowling with good annual plant growth.

## **Dodge**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed less numbers in previous years for mallards and blue-winged teal. Wood ducks seemed to have similar production this year compared to previous years. Canada goose broods also seemed to be less than in previous years in our area, likely do to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect lower numbers to previous years in the area. Our area has received average rainfall this summer, so water levels are similar to previous years. Aquatic food availability is normal with bidens, smartweed and millet being our top wetland foods on the landscape. Crop harvest in the area seems similar in corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay to previous years.

### ***Current summer big projects:***

- 1) None

### ***Drawdowns that might affect hunters:***

Some areas are drawn down

## **Jefferson**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for blue-winged teal and other ducks. Mallards and wood ducks seemed to have good production this year as we saw more broods this year compared to previous years. Canada goose broods however seemed to be less than in previous years in our area, likely do to the late snow we received in April. For total number of birds, we expect more numbers compared to previous years in the area. With constant late summer rains that sometimes were heavy our water levels are currently higher than normal. Aquatic food availability is normal with bidens, algae, and smartweed being our top wetland foods on the landscape . Crop harvest in the area seems behind in corn and soybeans, ahead in wheat and similar to previous years in alfalfa/hay.

### **Current summer big projects:**

- 1) None

### **Drawdowns that might affect hunters:**

None

## **Waukesha/Walworth**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards in our area., Canada goose broods however seemed to be less than compared to previous years in our area, likely do to the late snow we received in April. With average rainfall this summer we seem to currently have water levels comparable to a normal year. Aquatic food availability is less than normal on the landscape. In terms of crop harvest in the area seems similar in corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay.

### **Current summer big projects:**

- 1) Ongoing work on water control structures at Vernon Marsh and Paradise Valley.
- 2) Cattail and Phragmites spraying has occurred or is planned on Vernon, Paradise Valley, and Turtle Valley Wildlife Areas.

### **Drawdowns that might affect hunters:**

A dike breach at the Kincaid unit of Paradise Valley has lowered water levels, which cannot be repaired until the winter.

One refuge (no hunting allowed, closed area) at Vernon has lowered water levels in preparation for work on water control structures.

## **Rock/Green**

Regarding duck broods, we have observed similar numbers compared to previous years for mallards, wood ducks, blue-winged teal and other ducks. Canada goose broods also seemed similar to other years in our. For total number of birds, we expect similar numbers compared to previous years in the area. With constant late summer rains that sometimes were heavy our water levels currently are higher than normal. Aquatic food availability is normal on the landscape. Crop harvest in the area seems ahead in corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa/hay.

Current summer big projects:

1) None

Drawdowns that might affect hunters:

None

## **Statewide**

Wisconsin statewide outlook for this season looks similar to previous years. Brood counts seem average for mallards, blue-winged teal, wood ducks and other ducks. Canada goose numbers however seem to have been affected statewide due to the late snowfall we received in April that may affected our nesting geese. Late snowstorms in April set nesting back and caused a lot of first attempt failures across the state. Water levels across the state are variable with many places being near normal, with exceptions in southern and central Wisconsin. Southern Wisconsin has seen almost daily rainfall starting mid-August making water levels considerably higher than normal. Central Wisconsin on the other hand has been very dry with wildlife staff reporting almost drought like conditions. Wetland food across the state seems to be similar to previous years and crop harvest also seems to be similar in most areas with corn being slightly ahead of a normal year.

To be successful we encourage all of you to get out and scout before your hunting trips. Waterfowl hunters in Wisconsin have shown that hunters who scout 3 times before hunting shoot three times as many birds. It will be important also to check your spots out before hunting as some spots may not be huntable due to high water.

Be safe and happy hunting!

### **5 Important things to know:**

1. North duck zone will open one week later than in previous years, resulting in a single statewide opener for the North, South and Mississippi zones on Sept. 29;
2. Elimination of the Horicon Canada goose Management Zone (resulting in a single statewide regular goose zone);
3. Increase in the daily Canada goose bag limit to three birds per day and there is a second split in the Southern Canada goose zone resulting in a goose season that is open during the Christmas and New Year's holidays; and

4. Canada goose hunters, registration of Canada geese and in-field validation of the Canada goose hunting permit is no longer required.
5. Check out [The Basics of Waterfowl Hunting in Wisconsin](#) document on the [Waterfowl Hunting](#) webpage along with other useful tools in our Hunter resources tab for a few tips and tricks!

If you have any questions, please contact Trenton Rohrer WDNR Assistant Migratory Game Bird Ecologist send him an email or call.

**Email:** [Trenton.Rohrer@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Trenton.Rohrer@wisconsin.gov)

**Phone:** 608-261-6458